Youth Volunteerism & The Effects of Requirements & Motivations
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Introduction
Volunteering in juveniles has been gradually decreasing (Cesterle, Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004). Those who volunteer during high school tend to develop more proficient, healthy social attitudes (Wilson, 2000). Because of such positive outcomes, 64% of all public schools and 83% of public high schools featured some kind of community service program as of 2009 (McKam & Brantl, 2009). It is suggested, though, that voluntary service derives more benefits than required service (McLellan & Yunus, 2003). It is also suggested that some factors may greatly encourage volunteerism in juveniles, such as: religiosity (Gibson, 2008), parental modeling (Law and Shek, 2008), extracurricular involvement (Kirk, 2002), income (Ferrada, 2010), and gender (Karrel, Gross, Schor, 2003). This study aims to provide insight as to how to reestablish juvenile volunteerism.

Literature Review
Modeling is the most important variable affecting adolescent community participation; teens who have civic-minded parents will also exhibit similar attitudes (Gibson, 2008). Volunteer behavior is highly correlated with a sense of community (Toman and Leichtman, 2010). Volunteer behavior is highly correlated with a sense of community (Gallant, Smale & Arao, 2010).

Toman and Leichtman (2010) suggest that churchgoers are more likely to volunteer. Volunteer behavior is highly correlated with a sense of community (Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004). Those youth who volunteer during high school tend to develop more proficient, healthy social attitudes (Wilson, 2000). Because of such positive outcomes, 64% of all public schools and 83% of public high schools featured some kind of community service program as of 2009 (McKam & Brantl, 2009). It is suggested, though, that voluntary service derives more benefits than required service (McLellan & Yunus, 2003). It is also suggested that some factors may greatly encourage volunteerism in juveniles, such as: religiosity (Gibson, 2008), parental modeling (Law and Shek, 2008), extracurricular involvement (Kirk, 2002), income (Ferrada, 2010), and gender (Karrel, Gross, Schor, 2003). This study aims to provide insight as to how to reestablish juvenile volunteerism.

Methods
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Methodology
Population
277 students, grades 9th through 12th at a public high school in Northern Michigan.

Procedure
The surveys were physically distributed to all of the student body. Cover letters for parents, teachers, and students included purpose of the study, contact information, reassurance of confidentiality, and option for exclusion from the study. Study took place during a seminar (optional) period in the spring of 2012.

Instrument
62 item survey focusing on:
Volunteering Habit (4 items)
Volunteering Interactions (2 items)
Volunteering Motivations (8 items)
Extracurricular Participation (13 items)
Family Volunteering (4 items)
Community Connectedness (7 items)R eligiosity (5 items)
Self Esteem (10 items)
Employment (2 items)
Income (3 items)
GPA (1 item)
Demographics (3 items)

Response Rate: 71% (n=277)

Surveys with missing data were included in the analysis and cases with missing data were omitted automatically via SPSS pairwise deletion.

Gender: 56.5% (n=153) were female
Age: Majority 15-17; 74.4% (n=201), 14 or younger: 3.2% (n=9)

Parental Volunteering: 75.5% (n=207) of students reported that their parents had participated in volunteering during the past year.

Community Connectedness: 48.7% (n=134) of students indicated that they had either often or very often felt a sense of belonging to their community in the past year.

Intrinsic Motivation: 65.8% (n=185) of students rated personal values at least somewhat impactful on their behavior.

Volunteering: 47.8% (n=131) of students reported that they had voluntarily participated in service in the past year. 44.2% (n=119) reported that they had volunteered because their school required it.

Religiosity: 30.9% (n=94) of respondents reported that they never participated in religious activities.

Table 1: Correlation Between Indicators of Self Esteem and Nature of Service

Table 2: Correlation Between Indicators of Self Esteem and Nature of Service

Discussion and Conclusion
Law and Shek (2009) propose that there are two decisive factors which influence the volunteering trends of youth: family-modeling and family support. In the current research, the indicator parent participation in volunteering largely contributed to the frequency of an adolescent’s volunteered behavior (F(1.16)=22.055, p<.05) with an R² value of 0.117. A second analysis found that adolescents whose parents did volunteer also showed slightly greater frequency of voluntary participating in service (n=2.67, sd=0.88) than adolescents whose parents did not volunteer (n=2.50, sd=1.07), although no significant difference was found between the groups (t(272)=2.05, p<.05). This suggests that it is not just the parent’s engagement in service that encouraged the adolescent’s volunteerism, but rather the frequency with which the behavior was modeled.

References

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